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ABSTRACT

The implementation, delivery, and impact on students of news programs delivered to schools by Channel One and CNN-Newsroom were examined in seven rural districts in Wisconsin. Investigation covered three districts using CNN and four districts using Channel One within a three-county area. Involved administrators, teachers, and students responded to surveys targeted to each group according to program used. The innovative quality of both CNN and Channel One contributed to their implementation, although selections of Channel One relied strongly on administrative and board decisions and CNN selections relied more on teacher choice. The free equipment provided with Channel One was a major determinant of the program's selection. Delivery of the programs differed considerably. CNN programs took place in academic classrooms as part of regular courses, while Channel One programs occupied a wide variety of settings, including study halls and homerooms. Overall, teachers and students indicated that CNN contributed more to student knowledge than did Channel One. Nevertheless, students in a Channel One school in which programs were presented in an academic setting indicated as much recognition of the program's impact as did their counterparts in CNN schools. The use of commercials in Channel One programs did not preclude a majority of teachers from supporting continued use of the program. In Channel One schools, the influence of advertising on buying habits appeared greater for students who believed they gained knowledge from the program than for those who did not. Contains 36 references. (Author/TD)

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NATIONAL TELEVISION NEWS IN SEVEN RURAL DISTRICTS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The implementation, delivery, and impact on students of Channel One and CNN-Newsroom received attention in 7 rural districts in Wisconsin. Investigation covered 3 districts with CNN and 4 districts with Channel One within a 3-county area. Involved administrators, teachers, and students responded to surveys targeted to each group according to program used. The innovative quality of both CNN and Channel One contributed to their implementation, although selections of Channel One relied strongly on administrative and board decisions and CNN selections relied more on teacher choice. The free equipment provided with Channel One constituted a major determinant of the program's selection. Delivery of the programs differed considerably. CNN programs took place in academic classrooms as part of regular courses. Channel One programs occupied a wide variety of settings, including study halls and home rooms. Overall, CNN received from teachers and students greater recognition of its contribution to student knowledge than did Channel One. Nevertheless, students in a Channel One school in which the classes took place in an academic setting indicated as much recognition of the program's impact as did their counterparts in CNN schools. The use of commercials in Channel One programs did not preclude a majority of teachers from supporting continued use of the program. In Channel One schools, the influence of advertising on buying habits appeared greater for students who believed they gained knowledge from the program than those who did not.

During the past few years, many American schools have used the televised news programs Channel One and CNN Newsroom. Channel One has received considerable scrutiny, some of it highly unfavorable, while attention given to CNN Newsroom has been less extensive, but mostly benign. Yet despite investigation, not much agreement has been reached on the overall function and importance of these popular components of education. One impediment to a fuller understanding may be the fact that virtually all investigations have singled out only one program, ignoring the other and thereby missing elements that are and are not unique. In this study, however, we have attempted to compare the two programs within a homogeneous geographical area at a particular time.

The study addresses three basic questions. The first is how schools chose and implemented CNN and Channel One. The second is how school districts actually delivered the programs to students. The third is how students and teachers perceived the impact of a program on students' learning. We have given particular attention in terms of impact to the use of commercials in Channel One. The rural locale of the study also led us to attempt to ascertain whether any differences or similarities in the findings may be attributed to the peculiarities of the environment.

Channel One provides its users with television monitors, videocassette recorders and a satellite dish in exchange for a contractual obligation to use the program for three years (Whittle Communications, 1992). At the end of this period, the user can renew the contract or terminate it and return the equipment. Channel One broadcasts 180 days a year and requires schools to use programs 90 percent of the days schools are in session. By 1995, programs reached eight million secondary students, 40 percent of teenagers in the country (Gwynne, 1995).

The channel provides a daily twelve minute program that includes ten minutes of news and information and two minutes—two and a half minutes in some cases—of commercials, of which public service presentations comprise 15 percent. When not using the television equipment for Channel One programs, schools may use it for any purposes they wish. In its pilot period (Haney, 1989) and early years of regular operation (Endres, Endres & Miles, 1991, and Toch, 1992), Channel One gave less attention to "hard" news than to "lifestyle" segments on film, music and other topics of particular interest to teenagers. In 1993, however, the producers altered the format and increased the news format (Johnston, Brzezinski, and Anderman, 1994), although retaining its orientation toward teenage interests. With its new emphasis on "hard news"—for example, it has given extensive coverage to Bosnia, to Somalia, and to the Russian breakup—Channel One still uses the attention-getting techniques common to MTV and films, such as sound effects added to news reports, short bursts of image, soft-focus and slow motion.

The other program, CNN Newsroom, a division of the Turner Broadcasting System, provides a fifteen-minute commercial-free segment of news. It offers no hardware incentives to districts. Material from CNN, like that from Channel One, may be shown through videocassette recording at any time. Emphasizing its focus on teachers, A CNN official told a congressional committee, "We see the purpose of [CNN] very clearly as an opportunity for teachers to connect events in the real world to class discussion, reading, library research, homework, and critical thinking skills.... Our role is simply to provide the best news coverage we can produce to meet the needs of teachers" (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1991, p. 34). CNN claims to base its presentation on three major assumptions about the use of video in the classroom: Its news must be supported by the written word; it must conform to the agenda of the classroom; and it must support the existing curriculum (Turner Educational Service, 1991, p. 6). CNN uses its regular reporters, older than those used on Channel One, and generally presents longer stories, some recycled from regular CNN news broadcasts.

In some respects mystery surrounds the location of specific users of either of these corporate television programs. For reasons of confidentiality, neither has divulged the names of specific schools using the programs. Both programs achieved popularity in Wisconsin, although the State Department of Public Instruction appeared to be unaware of which districts used the programs. CNN's ratio of use was higher in Wisconsin than in the United States as a whole. In early 1993, according an official of the Turner Broadcasting System, CNN served 754 schools in the state (S. Milton, personal communication, 1993). Channel One was reported to be serving 115 (Smith, 1993). Because CNN targeted only social science classes while Channel One had large segments of the student body as its audience, the disparity in the number of schools served does not indicate an equal disparity in the number of students served.

Issues Explored

Information from previous studies and commentaries produced three basic series of questions that guide this exploratory study: How do school districts implement programs of CNN-Newsroom and Channel One? How do schools deliver the program to students? What impact do the programs, including commercials in Channel One, seem to have on students and schools? In presenting questions we give specific attention to an investigation covering a national sample of schools using Channel One during the same time period as this investigation: The final report of Johnston et al. (1994), which provides useful comparisons with certain areas of this study.

Questions on Implementation

CNN Newsroom does not involve contractual relationships, so its selection can depend more specifically on individual schools and teachers, almost always those in social studies. To bring the broadcasts into the classroom, teachers or media directors simply must arrange for school equipment, including a TV/VCR that can be programmed to record the show (Burkart, Rockman, & Ittelson, 1992, p. 11).

The contractual requirements of Channel One inevitably involve the school board and administration closely in the selection process, although teachers may initiate consideration. In some cases, however, states have restricted choice. One state has limited it to homeroom periods. New York has forbidden it outright (Gwynne, 1995). For reasons to receive attention later, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the former state superintendent have strongly recommended that districts not use it (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1990; Grover, 1992; Smith, 1993). Nevertheless, Channel One's free equipment can be a substantial inducement, particularly to districts with financial difficulties, since it may be used for various purposes when it is not transmitting Channel One programs. The equipment contributed to the enthusiasm of poor schools for the program (Celano & Neuman, 1994), and Johnston et al. (1994, p. 26) reported that the equipment constituted the primary reason why principals chose to adopt the program.

In this study, we wished to discover how each of the districts reached decisions to use one of the broadcasts and how the decisions to use CNN Newsroom differed from those to use Channel One. Why was a program chosen? Who had the most influence in making the recommendation for use? Did state selection requirements play a part? For Wisconsin, the negative attitude of the Department of Public Instruction toward Channel One gave the question special interest.

Questions on Delivery

To use CNN, teachers must be willing to make an effort the secure the program and materials, duplicate tapes and teachers' guides, and distribute everything to the classrooms before the school day. A detailed field study of several sites throughout the nation indicated that teachers usually integrated the programs into their social science curricular work and led discussions after the broadcasts (Burkart et al., 1992).

No one pattern prevails for Channel One. Not limited to social science classes, it provides a wide variety of deliveries to students. Johnston et al. (1994, p. 26) have noted that student learning appeared to be maximized when the Channel was used at the beginning of an instructional period, but that this was not a common practice. In their national sample, they found that 60 per cent of schools gave the program in homerooms or other non-instructional settings, and 24 percent gave it at the beginning of a period. Despite official distaste for the program, Wisconsin has imposed no place or time requirement, leaving the decision up to individual districts. The odd times of presentation, in non-academic rooms, often in the brief period before classes, when administrative duties and other distractions are common, cast into question the value of Channel One's requirement that schools provide broadcasts 90 percent of the days schools are in session. It is not surprising that observers have noted that Channel One recommendations that schools integrate broadcasts into the curriculum have not often been followed (Konrad, 1992). Despite the rather random pattern of delivery, however, Johnston et al. (1994, p. 19) did find frequent offerings, with most high school teachers reporting programs four or five times a week. Moreover, 70 percent of teachers reported making a significant effort to discuss important Channel One stories with their students (pp. 19-20).

In this study, we sought to discover how often the program was used, where it was used, how it articulated with the curriculum, and how much attention students gave it. Both teachers and students provided their assessment.

Questions on the Value and Impact of the Programs

The third series of questions concerned the overall value and impact of the programs. As noted earlier, while CNN Newsroom has drawn considerable praise, observers have shown a mixed response to Channel One. Questions here, covering both students and teachers, dealt with the basic usefulness of the program and the perceived learning of students, as well as with their reception of commercials and their outside sources of news. We gave attention to outside sources of news in order to ascertain any peculiarities of information that might have affected the impact.

CNN has received strong endorsement from professional organizations in education, virtually all of which have expressed criticism of Channel One. Most of those districts using the programs have expressed a high degree of satisfaction (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1991). Empirical evidence of CNN's impact on students remains limited, but the multi-site study by Burkhart et al. (1992) did suggest the effectiveness of the program in giving students knowledge of world events, geography, history and vocabulary, as well as enhancing "thinking skills." Few criticisms of the quality of the program have emerged, although the entire CNN news enterprise has drawn attacks for its ostensibly mild treatment of Iraq during the Gulf War.

Channel One has many attackers. Especially during its earlier period, it drew much criticism for its low intellectual content (Davis, 1992; Donnelly, 1992). A CNN spokesperson contrasted Channel One to CNN by asserting that CNN did not "dumb down" the news (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1991, p. 49). The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction had asserted that the program was not "instructionally effective" and that news material from a single source provided on a daily basis had "a high potential for bias" (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1990). Sometimes, as a result of its coverage of such issues as condom use, its influence on the morals and behavior of students also came under fire (Getting plugged into the news, 1992).

Yet the program also received considerable praise for providing information to which schools otherwise lacked access (Rudiman, 1990, Wulfmeyer & Muller, 1991). Under its newer format, which places much greater emphasis on major news, it has gained highly favorable publicity. It won the Peabody Award for its coverage of AIDS and defeated Prime Time Live to receive an award at the Chicago Film Festival (Gwynne, 1995). Johnston et al. (1994) reported that 67 percent of teachers would "strongly recommend" it to colleagues. Students found it a valuable experience. Principals also expressed enthusiasm (pp. 27-28), undoubtedly influenced to a certain extent by the free equipment.

Under old or new format, commercials constitute the most controversial aspect of Channel One, and the vitriolic opposition to commercials has undoubtedly affected assessments of the value of the news function. Many individuals and groups, including virtually all of the educational professional organizations and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (1990) have decried the use of commercials in instructional programs. Although some attacks have come from the values-oriented right, one group of which attempted to launch a boycott because of the behavior and "slinky outfits" of three female singers in a Pepsi commercial (Pepsi ad on Channel One leads to boycott, 1992), most attacks on commercials have come from liberals. The program has been accused of contributing to problems of public health and global pollution (Rank, 1992) and of

constituting a "sinister attempt by the right to convert students into a 'retail product '" (Apple, 1993, p 116). Many teachers and administrators, however, have praised the program, asserting that its benefits outweighed the alleged harm of commercials (Rudinow, 1990; Carlin, 1992; Tiene, 1993). Johnston et al. (1994, p. 96) reported that three fourths of teachers surveyed considered commercials an adequate trade-off for what was gained.

In this study, questions on the value of the program to students have been directed to teachers and students. We specifically asked students in Channel One classes also were asked about their reactions to commercials. Finally, we attempted to find out from all students how they acquired knowledge of national and international activities outside the school, and how other media experiences related to that which they watched in school.

Method

In order to secure a reasonable degree of comparison, we sought a homogeneous rural area that included districts using CNN and those using Channel One. We chose a seven-district region encompassing three counties in a 1,000 square mile area. The selection included twenty-two high schools. According to official size designations used in the state for categorization, ten high schools were rated small (fewer than 250 students), six medium (251-600 students) and six large (more than 600 students). We excluded from consideration two large schools in the area because they were located in a medium sized city and operated in a much different environment than the rural schools.

One of the investigators contacted all twenty schools by telephone or personal visit. The library media director or principal at each site verified whether or not particular schools utilized the news broadcasts. Eight of the twenty schools currently did. The investigators asked principals if they were willing to participate in the study. One principal refused. The study finally included two small schools and two medium schools that subscribed to Channel One and two small schools and two medium schools that subscribed to CNN Newsroom. All seven of the schools had been using broadcast programming for at least two years and intended to continue using it.

The surrounding countryside is largely agricultural, although one district is located 13 miles from a small metropolitan area of more than 50,000 residents and another is 20 miles from a small city of 25,000 in an adjacent state. One school is in a town of slightly more than 3,000 residents. All the others are in towns with fewer than 2,100. All the districts fit into the bottom quartile of total revenue available for government. All provided lower expenditure per pupil that the mean in the state. The financial problems have led all to join a rural coalition in a suit against the state, charging resources have been delivered inequitably. Most families living in the areas under investigation were of low or middle income, and minority students constituted less than 0.5 percent of the school populations.

Within the area, outside sources of information varied. Those newspapers available to students included local weeklies, dailies from the small cities on the periphery of the area, and dailies from the metropolitan areas of Wisconsin and an adjacent state. The local newspapers, which had a wider circulation than the larger ones, gave very little attention to national and international news. Radio in the area provided only short pieces of news, usually sandwiched between musical selections, although it also broadcast syndicated political, health, and personal-psychological advice programs. Television included the major networks, and those residents on cable could have CNN, C-Span and other sources of news.

To elicit information, we designed six separate instruments, one each for administrators, for teachers, and for students participating in CNN Newsroom and Channel

One. We pretested the instruments in two other districts, not adjacent to the ones studied, before deciding on the final instrument to be used. In mid-May 1993, one of us delivered the survey forms to each media director or principal.

All teachers, administrators, and students received survey forms, with the principal or library media director acting as contact person to ensure distribution and compilation of the survey. We promised anonymity to respondents. Teachers provided the forms to their students. All forms—those from administrators, teachers, and students—were returned by the deadline date of June 10. Administrators were queried on how they made decisions, on options they took for implementation, on their familiarity with state guidelines, on whether they followed a written material selection policy, and on the rationale for their choice. Questionnaires for teachers sought to elicit responses on their evaluation of TV as a learning tool in terms of student knowledge of current events, on whether they would recommend it to colleagues, on whether they required students to pay attention, on whether they used it as a basis of classroom discussion about current events, and on how they integrated the program into the curriculum. Questionnaires requested students to respond to items concerning their attention to the programs, their assessment of their learning, the integration of programs into classroom discussions, their non-classroom sources of news, and their attention to commercials. All respondents were requested to provide any comments they wished in spaces provided or on the backs of the survey forms.

All administrators involved, four in Channel One schools and three in CNN Newsroom schools, responded to the survey instruments. All thirty-five teachers responded. CNN Newsroom, used only with particular social studies classes, involved just three teachers, one in each school. Thirty-two teachers, representing a variety of subjects—nine taught social studies, although our promise of anonymity did not allow us to single them out—responded for Channel One. A total of 699 students, 523 from Channel One schools and 176 from CNN schools, responded. Some students did not reply, chiefly because the mid-May distribution of the surveys included periods where student absences, field trips and other activities contributed to less than full attendance. The responding students, however, constituted more than 92 percent of those involved in one or the other programs. The students responding constituted approximately 40 percent of all students enrolled in the schools; several students in the schools did not view either program.

Results

We show responses as frequency distributions. In some tables, we have used absolute figures and in others percentages. In tables illustrating teachers' responses, we have avoided using percentages, although in the body of the study we refer to percentages in a few instances for comparative purposes. The low number of teachers in our seven district universe—only one teacher in each of the CNN schools and one teacher in one of the four Channel One schools—can mislead unless always kept in mind.

Implementation

In CNN schools, two administrators reported the program to be in use for two years and one reported it to be in use for three. As Table 1 indicates, two CNN administrators decided to use the program on the basis of teacher requests; one, on the basis of a board decision. In the case of the board decision, however, teachers played a role in indicating their desire for the program. All administrators claimed to be influenced by the perception that CNN was an "innovative educational tool" and two noted the quality of the programs. State rules and guidelines appeared to play no strong part in selection. No administrator was completely aware of state guidelines, although two acknowledged being

TABLE 1

Program Implementation: Administrators' Responses, by Program Used

Attitude	Channels Used	
	CNN (n=3)	Ch. 1 (n=4)
Familiar with State Policy Regarding Ch. One and CNN?		
Yes, aware	0	1
Somewhat familiar	2	1
No, not familiar with state guidelines	1	2
Use written material selection policy used in arrive at decision to choose particular program?		
Yes	1	2
No	2	2
How was decision reached to use particular type of news carrier?		
Committee recommendation	0	1
Unilateral administrative decision	0	1
Board decision	1	2
Teacher request	2	0
Other	0	0
What influenced district to implement news programs? (Multiple responses allowed)		
Free hardware/satellite dish/wiring	0	4
Recommendations of fellow educators	0	3
Quality of programming	2	0
Considered innovative educational tool	3	3
Additional channels offered	0	1
Other	1	0

"somewhat" familiar. Two did not use their material selection policy in choosing the programs.

All principals of schools using Channel One admitted the enticement of free equipment. Their comments revealed frequent use of the equipment for various other curricular objectives. Curiously, in view of Channel One's purposes, two schools failed to get the full complement of equipment necessary to link all classes, but the principals still were grateful for what they received. Other reasons noted by principals as a reason for selecting Channel One included recommendations of other administrators, although these recommendations may very well have been related to the equipment. Three of the four principals, moreover, noted Channel One's use as an "innovative educational tool." Overall, equipment may have played a larger role in choice than instructional potential of the programs, as suggested by the wide variety of non-academic classroom settings in which the programs took place.

Two principals reported that their school boards made the decision to use Channel One, and in one case the principal made a unilateral decision, although he later sought concurrence with the district administrator and the board, as he would have to do, given the contractual nature of the use of Channel One. A committee took part in one case. Teachers as a group appeared to play no direct part. Curricular selection policy was not a prominent factor. State views did not play a major part in the selection of Channel One any more than they did with CNN users, despite the opposition to Channel One of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the attacks on it by the then-state superintendent .

Delivery

As noted, schools receiving CCN Newsroom through local television cable companies make no commitment to the Turner Broadcasting System, sign no contracts, and show the program as they see fit. The percentage of students watching in each school was 22, 19, and 55, respectively. All three schools with CNN Newsroom delivered the program in an academic setting, typically in two or three sections of social studies. The decision to use CNN rested solely with each classroom teacher, and the frequency of program use varied at the discretion of the teacher. Two teachers claimed to use the program every day, while a third claimed to use it only one or two days a week.

As Table 2 indicates, all three teachers using CNN Newsroom claimed that they required their students to pay attention "always." Although revealing somewhat less overall attention than their teachers' requirements may have implied, students, as indicated in Table 3, did register a fairly high level of attention, with approximately 74 percent claiming to pay attention "always" or "most of the time" during the entire program.

Student attention often may be associated with integration of the program into classroom activities. Perceptions differed between teachers and students. Two teachers claimed to use the CNN Newsroom programs as a basis for classroom discussion of current events on a "frequent" basis, and one responded "sometimes." Students themselves, however, did not find discussions as prevalent as teachers did. In responding to a question on whether the program information was generally used in classroom discussions, differences between students and teachers were especially divergent in only one school, "C," in which the teacher indicated "always or usually," but only 57 percent of students did, with more than a third declaring "never."

TABLE 2

Delivery of Programs: Teachers' Responses, by Program and School

	Number Responding, by School								
	CNN Schools				Channel One Schools				
	A	B	C	All	D	E	F	G	All
Response/number	1	1	1	3	1	10	7	14	32
Require attention?									
Always or usually	1	1	1	3	1	4	4	10	19
Some of time	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	7
Never	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	5
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Discussed in class?									
Always or usually	1	1	1	3	1	6	7	11	25
Some of time	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	5
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
How often given?									
Every day	1	0	1	2	0	4	4	8	16
3-4 days a week	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
1-2 days a week	0	1	0	1	0	5	3	3	11
Fewer than 1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Beginning to end?									
Always or usually	1	1	1	3	1	5	4	10	20
Only sometime	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	4
Never	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	5
No response	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2

TABLE 3

Delivery of Programs: Students' Responses, by Program and School

	CNN Schools				Channel One Schools				
	A	B	C	All	D	E	F	G	All
Response/number	55	42	79	176	41	174	142	166	523
Pay attention									
Always or usually	83	93	57	74	92	14	25	30	22
Some of time	15	7	34	22	7	33	39	48	40
Never	2	0	9	5	0	53	35	23	37
Discussed.									
Always or usually	36	50	14	29	76	9	3	10	12
Some of time	60	45	71	61	22	17	43	46	34
Never	4	3	15	9	0	75	53	45	54
How often given									
Every day, week	82	0	11	31	0	24	70	54	48
3-4 days a week	18	24	41	30	0	7	1	7	6
1-2 days a week	0	76	42	37	94	20	11	15	24
Fewer than 1	0	0	6	3	6	48	17	19	22
Where given									
Homeroom	3	2	1	3	0	72	13	18	34
Lunchroom	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	7
Academic class	95	98	96	96	100	0	8	3	17
Study hall, other	2	0	0	1	0	26	18	78	40

With respect to integrating the material through discussion, all of the CNN teachers discussed the material "always or usually." The students, although clearly recognizing that substantive discussion did occur, reported less discussion, with only 29 percent agreeing and 61 percent opting for "some of the time

With respect to integrating the material through discussion, all of the CNN teachers discussed the material "always or usually." The students, although clearly recognizing that substantive discussion did occur, reported less discussion, with only 29 percent agreeing

and 61 percent opting for "some of the time." In none of the schools did more than half the students agree with their teachers.

The frequency of classes also led to differing interpretations. In the school in which students believed their attention was lowest, only 11 percent agreeing with the teacher that classes occurred every day. Students were largely in agreement with the two other teachers, one of whom indicated giving classes every day and the other, 1-2 days a week. All teachers reported always or usually giving the programs from beginning to end, and all programs took place in academic classrooms, where they comprised part of the social studies curriculum. Confusion between homeroom and study halls led 5 percent of students to note these rooms as place of class, but investigation revealed only academic classrooms were used.

Not limited to social studies classes, Channel One was viewed more widely than CNN. In the schools utilizing Channel One, student participation was, respectively, 23 percent, 46 percent, 46 percent, and 70 percent. In schools where Channel One provided sufficient television monitors and teachers chose to or were directed to show the program, students viewed it in a study hall, homeroom, lunchroom, or academic class. In those schools that had not yet received sufficient equipment, only a fraction of the student body watched the program—at one site on an occasional basis in an academic class and at another site on a daily basis in several homerooms.

Sixty percent of teachers using Channel One noted they made students pay attention always or usually and 79 percent reported they always or usually discussed issues in class (see Table 2). Students, however, were even less likely than their peers in CNN schools to acknowledge their own attention or recognition of discussion (see Table 3). Only 22 percent acknowledged paying attention always or usually and only 12 percent reported discussing issues always or usually. Even more indicative, perhaps, of a certain malaise with respect to the programs was the fact that more than a third of the students indicated never paying attention and more than a half indicated that there was no discussion of the programs.

Although most students and teachers agreed that programs were given at least three days a week, they diverged in their report on fewer than one time a week, with students reporting this frequency far more often than teachers. Curiously, however, the difference between teachers and students was basically caused by one school in which 48 percent of students but no teacher reported less than a day, although one half of the teachers did acknowledge only 1-2 days a week. In only one Channel One school—the one in which one teacher taught all classes using it—was Channel One restricted to academic classes. Classes in other schools occupied study halls, homerooms and in the case of one school, a lunchroom.

As Tables 2 and 3 show, differences between schools receiving Channel One were sometimes notable. Some comments by teachers indicated that the plans for delivery may have been haphazard on the part of the administration. Writing in reply to a question on integration of the program, one teacher noted that "I haven't [used it in classroom discussion]. I didn't know I was supposed to." Between students and teachers, differences in memory and perception probably explained the variety of responses on duration and frequency of programs, and the different views on attention reflect the common problem of perceptions by teachers and students. In one school with low frequency of classes, the teacher, who taught all Channel One classes, and students differed somewhat on perceptions of frequency, but both the teacher and the students felt attention was high and discussions reasonably frequent.

Value of the Programs

As Table 4 indicates, students in CNN schools and Channel One schools resembled each other in their exposure to outside news sources. Newspapers did not play a major role in students' perceived acquisition of knowledge. In fact few students took much time to watch TV news or read newspapers. Radio, selected by many students as their major source of information, hardly provided any more than brief reports. The proportion of CNN students who selected that program given in the school as the "best source of current events information" was relatively small, 17 percent, although more than twice as large as those Channel One students selecting their school program over outside sources.

As Table 5 shows, all CNN teachers found value in the program. Two agreed that it was a "beneficial teaching tool" and that it definitely contributed to student knowledge of geography and current events. They would "strongly recommend" it to colleagues. Although not quite as enthusiastic, the other teacher declared it "sometimes" a beneficial teaching tool, would "recommend" it (if not strongly) to colleagues, and felt it at least "sometimes" contributed to students' knowledge. How did teachers' assessment of learning compare with students' assessment? Table 6 indicates responses of each to questions concerned with what was or seemed to be learned.

Even though some students felt discussion was limited, students in general reflected fairly high agreement that they learned "something important" always or usually. The lowest proportion of agreement about learning, 58 percent, came from the school where student attention also was somewhat lower than in other schools, a virtually duplicative 57 percent, and students seldom agreed with their teacher that discussion always occurred. It may be noted that in the school in which classes were given least often, students still believed strongly that they learned something important.

We have already noted administrators' support, and all the districts using Channel One, like those using CNN, would continue using it the following year. Teachers did not provide large support, although a majority attributed some value to Channel One. As Table 5 shows, a third would not recommend it to colleagues and another third would recommend it only with reservations. Only two of the 32 Channel One teachers, in contrast to two of three CNN teachers, would strongly recommend it. Several teachers deprecated the value of the programs. One wrote, without explaining the basis for comparison, "CNN is a better program!" Another stated, "I've found that this news is 'old news' and the students already know about it." A third comment: "The students, as a group, haven't been interested. They tune it out."

Yet at least 50 percent of teachers in one school and 72 percent in others did find the programs a "beneficial teaching tool" as indicated in Table 5. Moreover two thirds of teachers in all schools—a majority in three— believed that students "learned something important" at least some of the time. In one school a majority of teachers disagreed, feeling students "never" learned anything important.

As indicated in Table 6, in response to the question of whether they had "learned something important," only 30 percent of Channel One students, compared to 71 percent of CNN students, responded "always or usually." Relatively similar percentages responded "only some of the time" or "never." In contrast to CNN students, who rarely provided comments—and when they did they were positive— Channel One students freely expressed views about the reporters, the language, the content of the program, and the time it wasted. The expressed views were negative. One wrote: "Channel One is the most worthless, least informative 'news' program which I ever had the misfortune to watch. I

TABLE 4

Students' Non-School Source of News, by Program

Outside Source	% CNN (*n*=176)	% Ch 1 (*n*=523)
Watch national and international news on regular television network in your home?		
5-7 days a week	10	16
3-4 days a week	25	23
1-2 days a week	40	34
Never	24	28
Read national and international news in a daily newspaper?		
5-7 days a week	10	13
3-4 days a week	17	14
1-2 days a week	38	33
Never	36	40
Best daily source of current events information?		
Radio news	39	33
Television news	28	35
Newspapers	14	16
CNN Newsroom	17	0
Channel One	0	8
Other	3	8

feel that the news announcers are trying too hard to be 'cool' and make stupid jokes that they are trying to report facts and current news.... They also tend to speak in some sort of street 'jive' which is occasionally difficult to understand." Another student criticized the reporters' style. "The reporters are too fake and the stories are about things I don't care about...." One student would "sue" the school if the program was not out by the next year. Another: "I would rather watch MTV! Keep it off."

TABLE 5

Teachers' Responses: Value of Programs, by Program and School

	Number Responding, By School								
	CNN Schools				Channel One Schools				
	A	B	C	All	D	E	F	G	All
Response/Number	1	1	1	3	1	10	7	14	32
Beneficial tchg tool?									
Yes	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	4	7
Sometimes	0	1	0	1	1	4	4	7	16
No	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	2	8
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rec to colleagues?									
Strongly recom	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1
Recommend	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	4	8
With reservations	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	7	11
Would not recom	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	2	10
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Contr to Student Knowl of geog, current events?									
Yes	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	7	11
Sometimes	0	1	0	1	1	3	4	7	15
No	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	5
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Several students appeared angry that Channel One was taking away from time they would have used for study. Said one: "I don't think we should have to watch it [Channel One] in a study hall." Another: "Channel One is very stupid. It wastes 15 valuable minutes of study time!" Still another: "I feel that Channel One is...worthless because it takes up too much time during my study halls...."

TABLE 6

Students' Responses: Learning, by Program and School

	Percentage Responding, by School								
	CNN Schools				Channel One Schools				
	A	B	C	All	D	E	F	G	All
Response	*n*=55	*n*=42	*n*=79	*n*=176	*n*=41	*n*=174	*n*=142	*n*=166	*n*=523
Learn something important									
Always or usually	91	69	58	71	90	15	27	34	30
Only some time	7	31	35	25	7	30	37	47	36
Never	2	2	6	4	2	54	35	20	35

In fact, the location and type of the class clearly played a large part in students' evaluation of their attention and their time spent in discussion. It also was related, although often less notably, to teachers' attitudes on attention, the benefits of Channel One as a teaching tool, and its contribution to student learning. The students with the most negative attitude toward their learning attended the school in which all of them viewed Channel One in either homerooms or study halls or in the lunchroom. Students with the most positive view toward learning were in classes given in the academic classroom, part of a social studies class, given by one teacher. Ninety percent of these students believed they learned something important always or usually, far more than those in the other schools, where classes were not given as part of academic classes at all or were given only in a couple of instances. The students believed they learned (and felt they often discussed issues and usually gave attention) even though classes were given at most a day or so a week and the teacher, although remaining positive, had some doubts about learning efficacy. In this class students' perception of learning, if not the teacher's, exceeded those of many counterparts in the CNN school, revealing virtually the same responses as those given by students in the CNN school whose students displayed the most positive attitude of those manifested in CNN schools.

What part did commercials play? Administrators' choices to continue using the Channel One programs clearly did not feel that commercials impaired the benefits of the program. Teachers, by their willingness, however muted, to recommend programs to colleagues indicated that at least a majority discounted the baneful influences of commercials. Despite Channel One students' alacrity in discussing their views on the overall aspects of Channel One, they did not volunteer comments on commercials. They

TABLE 7

Channel One Students' Responses to Commercials

	Percentage Responding, by School				
Response	D	E	F	G	All
Pay attention?					
Always	15	8	4	8	7
Most of the time	39	9	20	18	17
Only some of the time	34	28	44	46	39
Never	12	49	30	28	35
No response	0	6	3	0	3
Annoying or boring?					
Yes	12	28	27	25	26
Sometimes	44	30	48	42	40
No	34	17	17	23	20
Not sure	10	19	6	8	11
No response	0	6	2	1	3
Interesting, informative?					
Yes	15	9	4	11	9
Sometimes	46	26	40	40	36
No	27	40	46	41	41
Not sure	12	19	8	8	12
No response	0	7	2	0	3
Feel like buying any of the products advertised					
Yes	5	8	7	10	8
Sometimes	44	19	39	26	29
No	37	51	44	51	48
Not sure	15	16	7	13	13
No response	0	5	3	0	2

did, however, respond to items on the survey, as indicated in Table 7, displaying attitudes somewhat more negative than positive. Only 38 percent of students responded "yes" or "sometimes" to feeling like buying any of the products advertised in the commercials. Curiously, however, students in the schools in which students believed they learned the most expressed stronger feeling about wishing to buy materials advertised—some 49 percent responded "yes" or "sometimes" when asked about feeling like buying any of the products advertised by commercials— than students whose attitude toward learning ranged from somewhat less enthusiastic to entirely negative. The students who displayed the most negative attitude toward their learning transferred that attitude to commercials evidently, with only 27 percent responding "yes" or "sometimes."

Discussion

Schools using CNN and those using Channel One differed considerably in implementing programs. The CNN schools tended to use the programs with active teachers' involvement in choice and administrators' strong belief in the quality of the program. The Channel One schools' decisions rested more with the administration and board, with teacher requests playing no obvious part, perhaps an inevitable consequence of contract requirements. For neither Channel One nor CNN, however, did state requirements seem to carry much importance, even though the Department of Public Instruction explicitly opposed Channel One. Although administrators in Channel One schools and CNN schools noted the importance of the program as an innovative tool, the free equipment in Channel One constituted a prime reason for its choice.

CNN and Channel One districts differed in their delivery of programs. The CNN news programs took place in academic classroom settings, conducted by social studies teachers. Although regular academic classroom settings at specific times occurred for all classes in one Channel One school and occasional ones in others, the majority of classes took place in study halls or homerooms and at various times. The Channel One students viewing the courses in these conditions often had little opportunity for discussion and little reason to give attention.

The way in which the Channel One program was implemented and delivered related strongly to its impact. The program's rather haphazard use stands out. Part of the problem rested with Channel One suppliers, who provided an insufficient number of monitors to schools. But even when equipment was adequate, some administrators—and some teachers—seemed more interested in securing it for purposes other than its designed goal of making Channel One an intrinsic part of the curriculum. Once the equipment was received, the program's educational goal seemed to have been ignored in several schools. When the equipment itself constitutes the main reason for selection, of course, the program's use may become an actual detriment to learning, a condition most clearly epitomized by complaints of students about the elimination of their time for study in study halls. The indifference with which equipment was sometimes used, as well as the insufficiency of equipment for some schools, shows the fantasy of the 90 percent time requirement enunciated in Channel One policy. The possibility exists, however, that when the program's use proved dysfunctional to learning, the non-program uses of the equipment, extensive in some cases, counterbalanced the harm.

As Johnston et al. (1994) has noted, the value of programs seemed to be related to the location of their delivery. The overall differences between Channel One and CNN masked the fact that when students received information in academic classrooms, with a teacher tying material to studies, students' positive perception of their learning did not differ between the programs. It appears that if Channel One could be used only in academic

classrooms, presumably with interested teachers, its overall value to students as a news provider would be higher than it now is.

The question of overall value must be addressed in relation to the importance of news. Students revealed that only a small portion of their information on current events came from their in-school programs—less for viewers of Channel One than for those of CNN. Evidence suggests, however, that if the news is integrated into the curriculum the students may increase their understanding of current affairs. The programs cannot provide a wide breadth any more than they can substitute for enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers, but they can serve as a vehicle for looking at certain issues in depth. Unfortunately, understanding news in depth does not characterize most Americans, who have never distinguished themselves by their knowledge of current affairs (Della Carpini & Keeter, 1991). Surveys by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press reveal a largely uninformed public. In 1994, only 28 percent of Americans knew the name of the "ethnic group with which the Israelis recently reached a peace accord," only 50 percent identified the president of Russia, and only 13 percent identified Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Hillary Who? 1994). In 1995, a Times survey indicated that only 30 percent of people followed reports about the economy, major Supreme Court decisions, race and gender issues, and major scientific events (Superville, 1995). Certainly, if one accepts the proposition that citizens' knowledge of current affairs is important to a democracy and that the interrelations among nations require more knowledge than ever before, one must hope that any means of increasing students' knowledge will have a beneficial effect.

Although CNN has generally escaped charges of bias for its school presentations per se—if not for its regular news—Channel One had been accused of bias by people representing different ends of the political spectrum. News may often reflect ideological orientations of writers and producers, and any single source of news may skew information in particular ways. Consequently, even though no complaints of bias emerged in comments from teachers or students, its existence cannot be denied. Family and associates have a much more influential role in molding students' attitudes than schools do (Koch, 1995; Yeric & Todd, 1989, pp. 45-46), but in areas where knowledge is low, the media may have some impact (Goidel & Langley, 1995). Ideological influence, nevertheless, may be exerted through books and teacher activities in general to which students may be exposed far more intensively and over a longer period than they are by news broadcasts. Ideally, students should be trained to detect attempts to influence them for any reason, political, social, or commercial, and teachers should make an attempt to provide critical observation tools to students. Failure of students to receive adequate instruction in interpreting messages reflects a problem that may never be fully solvable, but does not justify the censorship of news coming into the classroom.

A counterpart of bias in the news itself, commercials present to children and adults a particular, idealized view of products. Sponsors would not pay fees to Channel One if they did not expect commercials to influence buying decisions. Although many students in the Channel One schools tended to look negatively at the commercials shown, those students in the Channel One school who gave the most attention to academic material also gave most attention to the commercials. Probably, attention to any item tended to be deflected from TV in classes given in study halls and home rooms at odd times, while the mindset created by the learning environment of classrooms carried over into attitudes toward commercials. Yet how dangerous are the commercials? By and large teachers and administrators in this study were in accord with those in the study of Johnston et al. (1994) in believing commercials to be a fair trade-off for other benefits of Channel One. Free equipment that can be used for various purposes contributes to this view, but overall the acceptability of commercials may be more related to the ubiquity of commercials and advertisements in general.

By the time students are eighteen, they probably have viewed some 200,000 commercials, according to Frank Mankiewicz, of Hill and Knowlton Public Affairs Worldwide (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1991, p. 52). Wulfemeyer & Mueller (1991) have estimated that students have probably seen 1,000,000 advertisements. Advertisements are displayed in various places in schools. With respect to television commercials, children in rural areas may actually tend to watch more TV than children elsewhere (Sun, Hobbs, Elder & Li, 1994), thus increasing their exposure to commercials. Consequently commercials in the classroom hardly reflect propaganda reaching unsuspecting victims. In a classroom, where commercials constitute part of a regular course, they are viewed in an atmosphere where some informed criticism can develop, even if it does not always do so. In this situation, they may not be as harmful as some critics have charged—certainly no more harmful than other forms of fact interpretation that reach students through the media.

What about the rural nature of the schools in this study? Do any findings appear to be influenced by the location? Did actions or responses of the staff or students differ from those of others studied? Answers to this question must be highly speculative. The limited available information on international and national affairs in rural areas (clearly, students' television watching does not encompass much news) may bestow greater importance on news items presented in schools, when material is presented adequately, than in areas in which information is more widely available, not only to students but to their families. Even if the amount of time spent on the news received at school is less than that received outside school, it allows for exploration in depth when its delivery is adequate.

As manifested in school districts that chose Channel One, the importance of equipment seems extraordinarily high. Yet as an outcome of limited resources, it may mirror the attitude toward and use of equipment in many urban districts.

Not only did the lack of resources in these rural areas increase the attractiveness of free equipment, but the remoteness of location may have allowed schools to deviate considerably from the guidelines presented by Channel One for using or not using the programs. It is possible that the relatively less formal structure of authority in rural districts, in contrast to urban and suburban districts, may result in a less rigid adherence to rules and regulations in general (Wahlstrom & Louis, 1993), even when they come from outside the school, whether from a company supplying equipment or, for that matter, a state department. Conversely, the remote location of the rural districts may have led Channel One to give less attention to the area than it would have given more easily accessible areas, resulting in the inadequate supply of equipment in some cases.

Finally, occasional comments of students about the speech of the Channel One reporters may indicate that the language of urban areas could be dysfunctional in certain rural areas, at least when it is used in news reportage. Although it might be argued that an understanding of terms and phrases used elsewhere contributed to students' increased knowledge of society, the use of language that is not understood or is resented as patronizing may contribute to its rejection. Even if students have heard the language in the context of entertainment, they may not accept it as part of news broadcasts, the purpose of which is so different, unless a teacher can articulate the broadcasts with the academic background. The differentiation of language according to context may reflect a tendency of individuals, noted by Cyert and March (1964), to see the same situation differently, depending on whether it is seen alone or simultaneously with other situations.

The limited area of this study clearly makes generalization highly speculative. Rural areas, like suburban and urban areas, exhibit wide diversity. Such diversity requires a series of studies to give reasonably complete knowledge of the relationship of Channel One

and CNN to schools. The comparative approach used in this study, however, should receive consideration for future studies because the perspective it provides cannot be acquired by studies of single programs, either CNN or Channel One.

Note

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